



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
EVELYN SANGUINETTI – LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Joint Meeting:
Illinois Rivers Coordinating Council
Mississippi River Coordinating Council
Wabash and Ohio Rivers Coordinating Council

Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti, Chair

June 29, 2015 2:00PM
Stratton Building A-1
Springfield, IL

Conference Number: 1-888-806-4788
Access Code: 8040585503#

Call to order:

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. She welcomed everyone. She also made sure that anyone who was interested in public comment was sure to know that they could sign up with Kaitlin Kinser and that they would be allowed three minutes speaking time towards the end of the meeting.

Roll Call:

Citizen Members

All of the terms of the citizen members on each of the 3 councils had expired and no new members had been appointed to the new positions yet.

Agencies

Present:

- Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti
- Make Rahe, Illinois Department of Agriculture
- Heidi Brown-McCreery, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Debbie Bruce, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Michael Norris, Illinois Department of Historic Preservation
- Designee, Illinois Department of Transportation

Absent:

- Illinois EPA
- Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Quorum:

Former council members Daphne Mitchell (IRCC), Richard Worthen (IRCC), Clark Bullard (WORCC), stated they believed they were still members of the council.

It was mentioned by Leah Guffey, that members were told at the previous meeting that if they wanted to reapply any of the council they should have done so at appointments.illinois.gov. No members had reapplied at the time of the meeting. All appointments had expired as of March.

No quorum was reached, but there were enough members to quantify a meeting.

Opening Remarks:

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti welcomed everyone to the second quarterly joint meeting of the rivers coordinating councils.

The Lt. Governor started her remarks, by stating that the Illinois, Mississippi and the Wabash and Ohio Rivers Coordinating Councils each contain several citizen appointments. She also reminded them that past terms had expired, but that the Governor would soon be appointing new members to serve.

These citizen members will represent diverse river-related interests including environmental protection, commerce, flood management, tourism and recreation.

Presentations:

Col. Anthony Mitchell, Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti introduced Col. Anthony Mitchell from the Army Corps of Engineers in the St. Louis District to give an update on the rapid rising waters across Illinois.

Col. Mitchell informed the group in the St. Louis District there are ten different river stream networks, 750 miles of levees, 92 flood control systems, a five lake projects and 460 navel channels that are maintained by the Army Corps.

Col. Mitchell went over the existing emergency plans they have in place any time there are flooding issues in his district.

Col. Mitchell stated the Army Corps protects water from people and people from water, while working to improve safety and help improve the overall quality of life.

With the current state of emergency the team has been tasked with the number one priority of community safety. The Army Corps works to prevent flooding both in the short and long term.

Flood status reports, our areas of concern are on the Mississippi river they are above and we are having elevated flooding areas. The Corps have flood fighting teams out addressing concerns.

Lock closure 24 and 25 on the Mississippi River could happen soon, depending on the rain.

The Kaskaskia River is closed and has been for four days now. The Army Corps are monitoring the flood risk mitigation areas.

Flood fighting teams are engaging in flood mediation efforts where necessary.

Kevin Irons, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Kevin Irons is from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Kevin is the program manager for aquatic nuisance species. He is involved in monitoring and preventing invasive species mostly Asian Carp from entering the great lakes.

Irons explained the different species of Asian Carp in the Illinois River, mostly focusing on silver and big headed carp.

Illinois leads the way in addressing the Asian Carp problem; the Department of Natural Resources has been involved in addressing the issue for a long time.

Mr. Irons covered the different kinds of invasive species that you can find in Illinois' river system. He talked about how diverse our waterways are, especially in the Illinois River. Invasive species can be a threat to that diversity.

Irons touched base on common carp being around in our rivers for over 100 years, and that lots of our common fish live with these species.

The reason we are worried about nuisance species is because of the effect that they have the environment.

Grass Carp are used in our Illinois Rivers to remove unwanted grass from the bottoms of lakes, and the rivers to make for more recreational fishing. We make them unable to produce so that they do not become an overly large nuisance.

IDNR has a lot of different studies on what invasive species do to our environment, but a lot of species have been brought over to fix other problems.

Nutria is one of those species; they are a beaver like rodent, which can cause environmental problems where they are located along the Mississippi River and elsewhere. They can take over wetlands. They are a real problem in places like Louisiana and could move northward over time into Illinois' river system.

Asian Carp is a species that we are monitoring and consider invasive because of the above issues. They also jump out of water and can cause damage to property and humans.

Common carp were brought in 1800 because Europeans liked to eat them. Asian Carp are a different kind of carp. Carp is actually a large minnow. There is actually a fourth kind of carp that is a black carp, which eats snails. The black carp is used in areas where snails in waterways are an issue, including aquaculture.

Irons showed a video showing silver carp jumping up into boats.

High flood waters create additional spawning for the Asian Carp. So this year we will could see an increase in Asian Carp population because of the high flood waters.

Big headed carp are also used in aquaculture. Big headed carp eat algae, which helps make for a cleaner environment for other fish in aquaculture. In particular, this method is used for producing catfish because it makes the catfish healthier and taste better.

Big head and silver head carp were brought into the states in 1900's.

They first escaped in the early 1990's. We had only since a few in the waters until the early 2000's and then they starting expanding their spawning in the Illinois River. Since then there's been a big increase in population and range.

Different carp species have been working their way up the Illinois River and are approaching Lake Michigan.

IDNR has been monitoring the electrical barrier since 2002. In 2009, Notre Dame University came out with a new study that showed some carp near the barrier.

IDNR is working to put someone in the water every month around the Chicago area to help monitor and make sure the Asian Carp barrier is working.

Beginning in 2002, authorities have been putting in electricity into the water to prevent the spread of carp. It does not hurt the fish, but it does hold the fish by knocking them out and sending them back down stream.

IDNR did a fish kill for about 6 miles on the Illinois River in 2009 and only caught one big head carp.

Since 2010, IDNR has not found anything above the barrier or anywhere close to the barrier.

Illinois DNR receives a lot of federal money to do reports on the barrier, and to help prevent Asian Carp from going into the Great Lakes.

If the Asian Carp were to get into the Great Lakes it could threaten a multi-billion dollar fishing industry.

Army Corps of Engineers is trying to put another barrier in the water to prevent the spread of Asian Carp.

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti thanked Mr. Irons for coming, and asked him what other invasive species create problems for our rivers.

Mr. Irons said that Hydrilla is a plant IDNR has seen problems with. Hydrilla destroys fish and wildlife habitat, and hurts recreational opportunities, such as water skiing.

Member Updates

The members then went around the room to introduce themselves, and were allowed up to 3 minutes for updates.

Public Comment:

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti then asked if there was anyone signed up for public comment. Kaitlin Kinser informed the Lt. Governor no one had signed up.

Calendar Items:

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti announced the upcoming events and meetings.

Governor's Biennial Conference in Peoria October 27-29, 2015.

Next joint meeting is going to be held on October 27, 2015.

Adjournment:

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti adjourned the meeting at 3:10 pm.